



SBSP: Possibilities as a planning tool

Story by Alexander Kufel

There is an unrelenting quality about the future that promises its arrival whether or not action is taken. The advantages of worrying about the future far outweigh the disadvantages, said HED's chief of acquisitions and new technologies, Wendell Awada, a recent member of the USACE Corps-wide Scenario Based Strategic Planning (SBSP) Workgroup. (See related story on page 9).

SBSP is a planning method based on figuring out the most important factors that will ultimately affect an organization. It originated as a development tool for trying to determine what the world will look like for Year 2020 stratagems, but has since come to be employed by USACE to help plan future courses of action. Jim Ligh, IM, another Workgroup participant, said that scenarios are not



predictions, they are possibilities.

With POD and HED having recently undergone restructuring that essentially redefined their existences, the time has never been better to plot scenarios proponents of strategic planning believe will be in existence in one year, three years, and even, 20 years.

Through their Workgroup participation, Awada and Ligh said they not only learned a means of anticipating the future, but helped apply it at the USACE level, and are now helping to define and reshape POD and HED organizations as well.

"SBSP does not focus on worst-case scenarios," said Awada. "Instead, it looks at a full range of possibilities. It looks at predicting alternate futures."

Thus, possible regional socio-economic conditions such as prosperity and growth or depression and instability are viewed in the light of political and cultural possibilities. Culture, economics, technology and military matters are each examined by the group as a whole. The resulting scenarios are not casual projections, but in-depth analyses of trends and uncertainties.

"Six groups of people projecting what the world will look like produce long, long lists," said Ligh.

The tool works because it focuses creativity, said Awada. Predicting the future has to be approached vigorously. Thus, the SBSP Workgroup consisted of 11 people from USACE and 11 people from the field who met monthly at USACE headquarters in Washington, D.C. Not everyone was able to attend every meeting, he added. So, participation was usually between 15-20 people. Awada attended six sessions since October 1997. He said that the group size is small enough for actual discussions to take place but large enough to produce impressive results.

Both participants said that it was time well spent, depending on what is done with the knowledge they acquired now that they are applying it at home.

Jim Ligh perhaps sums it up best by saying that he thinks "we need to explain the connection of the Chief's vision he created when he came on-board to this new initiative to continue the strategic process and add to that vision. The key question that needs to be answered is: The Corps has a vision, where do we go from here?"

Contractors' concerns about local hiring aired at hearing

Story by Larry Hawthorne

More than eight of every 10 construction contracts Honolulu Engineer District awarded last year went to local firms. That was one of the more interesting facts gathered during testimony heard in early December at a Hawaii State Senate Hearing on contracting procedures among military services.

Senator Cal Kawamoto scheduled the special meeting and invited panels from local industry and military contracting agencies to testify on impacts of a federal contracting law and local efforts toward compliance.

About a dozen representatives of the military and a similar number of local union and state contracting officials centered their comments on Section 8078 of Public Law 99-190. The provision, signed into law in 1985, requires federal construction contractors operating in Hawaii to hire local labor when the state unemployment rate exceeds the national average. That condition has existed in Hawaii since 1995.

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